

**Education Committee  
Wednesday, March 15, 2023**

**House Bill 6881: An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Education Statutes Related to Educator Compensation and Paraeducators - Support**

Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee:

My name is Robin Lateer, and I am a resident of Tolland. I work as a paraeducator in the Tolland Public School district at Tolland High School. I offer the following testimony in support of House Bill 6881: An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Education Statutes Related to Educator Compensation and Paraeducators:

As an experienced Paraeducator, I urge the passing of House Bill 6881 to address the pressing issues that we face on a daily basis. Paraeducators play a crucial role in supporting students with IEP plans to assist in ensuring that they receive the education they deserve. However, the current conditions under which we work are far from ideal.

Paraeducators play a critical role in supporting students and teachers in classrooms, providing one-on-one assistance to students with special needs, helping to manage behavior and classroom activities, and supporting teachers in educating our students. Despite the important role we play, Paraeducators are paid low wages, which has led to high turnover rates and difficulty in attracting and retaining skilled professionals in our town. Additionally, fair pay can attract more qualified candidates to the profession, improving the quality of support provided in classrooms.

Another major issue that Paraeducators face is the high cost of healthcare. I personally cannot afford the high deductible plan that is offered in my town, which could be a significant financial burden, particularly for those of us with chronic conditions and disabilities in our families. This puts Paraeducators in a difficult situation where we may have to choose between paying for our healthcare and meeting other financial obligations.

There is also a shortage of Paraeducators in my town's schools, which makes it difficult to provide adequate support to students. As a result, many students do not receive the individualized attention and support they need to succeed in school. This shortage of Paraeducators is due in part to the low wages and lack of benefits that discourage individuals from pursuing careers in this field.

In conclusion, the passing of House Bill 6881 would be a significant step in the right direction towards addressing these pressing issues. It would provide fair wages for the critical work that Paraeducators do, offer affordable healthcare benefits, and provide the professional development opportunities that we deserve. It would also attract and retain skilled professionals, and ultimately lead to improved outcomes for students. I urge lawmakers to support this important legislation.

Robin Lateer  
Tolland High School